DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 132 442 CG 005 553

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TITLE Effects of Tutoring on the Tutee in an Upward Bound Program.
PUB DATE 23 Mar 70
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (New Orleans, Louisiana, March, 1970)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cross Age Teaching; Disadvantaged Youth; *Economically Disadvantaged; Educational Development; Junior High Schools; *Junior High School Students; *Remedial Programs; Social Development; Student Attitudes; *Tutorial Programs; Underachievers
IDENTIFIERS *Project Upward Bound

ABSTRACT

Underachieving ninth grade students from low socioeconomic backgrounds were tutored by college students from similar backgrounds. Questionnaires were then completed by the tutees, tutors, school staff and the parents of tutees. For over half the tutees, an improvement in grades was reported. Changes in educational motivation, attitudes toward school, and aspiration level were evident. The value of a tutoring program in enhancing remedial programs is stressed. (KS)

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ED132442

EFFECTS OF TUTORING ON THE TUTEE IN AN UPWARD BOUND PROGRAM

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Convention at New Orleans, Louisiana
March 23, 1970

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CG 005 553

EFFECTS OF TUTORING ON THE TUTEE IN AN UPWARD BOUND PROGRAM

In recent years there has been a proliferation of remedial programs throughout the country. A significant number of these programs can be classified under the broad category of "Upward Bound." However, many programs have also been implemented to serve the needs of underachievers from all socio-economic environments.

A compilation of 215 remedial programs scattered throughout the country has made it apparent that there are wide variations among such programs. Despite the diversity in the number of students involved, the level toward which they are directed, and the mode of implementation, remedial programs almost invariably include tutoring as an aspect of the total program.

Tutorial programs defy classifications because of the many variables involved. The programs vary in grade level, subjects tutored and pupil-tutor rates. In some programs tutors are paid, in others they are volunteers. Depending on the program, the tutors may be teachers, volunteer adults, college students, high school students, or upper classmen in the same grade grouping. Time and location of tutoring varies with each program. Underlying all of these variables is the unifying thread of the goal of these programs. The stated goal of most tutoring programs is to assist the student in his academic and social development.

An "Upward Bound" program in a large metropolitan area was investigated in detail with the tutorial program being the focus of the study. The aspect of the study being reported here is related to the stated goals of academic and social development of the tutee. It examines the extent of educational growth and attitudinal change that has taken place among 580 tutees in the program under study.

Students were selected for the program in the 9th grade on the basis of high potential which had been hampered by socio-economic disadvantage. The tutees were assigned to five different centers according to the geographic location of their residence. Tutors were assigned from colleges in the same city. The criterion that tutors come from the same socio-economic background as the tutee was based on the assumption that this similarity would facilitate the development of rapport between tutor and tutee and permit the tutor to serve as a tutor-mentor. The tutors were paid an hourly stipend for their services. The teachers and counselors were selected on the basis of their interest in participating in the program. Physical facilities and availability of tutors varied from center to center, thus influencing the implementation of the tutoring program.

The data was gathered by means of questionnaires completed by the tutees, tutors, school staff and parents of tutees. The data was analyzed according to center, sex, age and grade. The Chi-Square test was used to determine significance of differences in the distribution of responses within the different classifications. Judgments involving relative importance of alternatives were ranked and similarities for the groups within each classification were assessed by Spearman's

Rank Order Correlation when two groups were involved and Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance when there were more than two groups in the category.

The results were abstracted and combined in order to answer the following questions:

1. Did the tutees' grades improve in the subjects in which tutoring took place?

2. Does the tutor assume the expected tutor-mentor role?

3. Are there any noticeable attitudinal changes in the tutee as a consequence of the program?

Table I presents a composite of responses by all groups to a question relative to the improvement in grades by the tutee in the subjects being tutored. In order to make the data comparable, all responses indicating indecision were equally divided between the positive and negative categories.

TABLE I.

WAS THERE A NOTICEABLE ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT BY THE TUTEES IN THE SUBJECTS IN WHICH TUTORING TOOK PLACE?
(Reported in Percent)

	TUTEES	TEACHERS	TUTORS	PARENTS
YES	58.3	54.5	87.4	84.7
NO	41.7	45.5	12.6	15.3

It is important to note that there is substantial agreement between tutees and teachers in the percent showing improvement. Since the judgments of both of these groups are limited by the reality of the actual grades given and received, their agreement suggests that it would be reasonably accurate to conclude that the tutoring program has been a factor in the academic improvement of more than half of the students.

It is interesting to note that the judgments of tutors and parents are very similar and highly inflated when compared to the tutee-teacher judgments. The over-estimation by these two groups might be explained by the influence of "wishful thinking" in which both groups can be expected to indulge.

The results indicate that there is a pleasant and friendly tutor-tutee relationship. Only 2.7% of the teachers believe that the tutor-tutee relationship was not friendly.

TABLE II.

IS TUTORING A PLEASANT EXPERIENCE FOR THE TUTEE?

	TUTEES	TUTORS	PARENTS
YES	49.1	93.4	66.7
NO	10.0	6.6	8.0
NO OPINION	40.9	0.0	25.3

The results in Table II confirms this judgment. Amid the wide variability in "Yes" and "No Opinion" responses, there is consistent agreement that only a small percent of tutors and tutees find the sessions unpleasant. However, the indications are that the relationship does not often develop beyond a superficial friendliness. Only 25.7% of the tutees report that they discuss personal problems with the tutor and both, tutor and tutee, agree that personal-social relationship beyond the school situation is virtually non-existent as shown in Table III.

TABLE III.

TUTOR-TUTEE SOCIAL CONTACTS

(Percent of Respondents)

	TUTEE	TUTOR
TUTOR VISITS HOME OF TUTEE	.2	3.0
TUTEE VISITS HOME OF TUTOR	1.0	1.0

The data offers a wide range of indicators as to change in attitude on the part of the tutee. Most of the tutors (82.8%) believe that the tutees are interested in getting good grades while 96% of the parents report that their children talk about going to college and college life. Both tutors and tutees agree that College Life and Job Careers are the two topics of major interest to the tutees in

terms of frequency of discussion. The areas of interest are apparently similar for all tutees since the correlations for the rank order of importance of topics discussed range from .96 to 1.0 for centers, sex, age and grade distributions.

Both parents and teachers have noted specific changes in attitude as reported in Table IV.

TABLE IV.

JUDGMENTS OF PARENTS AS TO IMPROVEMENT IN ATTITUDE BY TUTEE

	IMPROVE FEELING TOWARD:		
	STUDY	SCHOOL	TEACHER
YES	73.3	74.4	65.3
NO	8.0	9.3	18.7
NO CHANGE	18.7	16.3	16.0

Table IV. suggests that there has been a greater improvement in attitude toward education than toward people in education, such as teachers. This indication is supported by a report of teachers in which there is almost total agreement that the areas of greatest improvement in which the tutees have evidenced favorable change are in: 1) educational motivation; 2) attitude toward school; 3) aspiration level and; 4) self-concept, in that order. Attitude toward people as peers, teachers, counselors, showed the least amount of favorable change.

In summary, the results indicate that, although the expected

tutor-mentor role did not evolve, the tutor-tutee relationship was generally congenial. Improvement in grades was reported for over half of the tutees, indicating a reasonable attainment of the goal of academic improvement. Changes in attitude among the tutees were evident, particularly in the areas of educational motivation, attitude toward school, aspiration level and self-concept. Thus, it would appear that, despite the variability within the program, the benefits of the tutoring program permeated the total program. Since tutoring programs throughout the country almost invariably report some degree of sucess, it would appear that the tutoring programs serve to enhance a remedial program.

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